



Grisel Marrero

- Senior Chief Petty Officer U.S. Navy
- Age 30 at the time of the arrest
- Dereliction of Duty
- Making False Official Statements



CDSE

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CASE STUDY

Making False Official Statements

WHAT HAPPENED

Grisel Marrero was a Command Senior Chief in the United States Navy assigned to the littoral combat ship USS Manchester. As the Manchester prepared for a West Pacific deployment in April 2023, Marrero coordinated the procurement, installation, and use of an unauthorized and unapproved Starlink Wi-Fi network. This network was installed and concealed from the regular view of officers. The network was intended to be used exclusively by Marrero and her co-conspirators. Marrero charged the \$1,000/month cost of the network to a leadership association debit card.

After being confronted, she and the other chiefs tried to remove the dish, then told commanders they only used it while in port. Marrero finally admitted to being behind the illegal network to her commanding officer on August 26, 2023. Court martial records show that Marrero pleaded guilty to two counts of violating UCMJ, Article 92 (Dereliction of Duty). In the first charge, she “failed to prevent the exposure to operational security risk, as it was her duty to do, to wit: initiated procurement, installation and use of an unauthorized and unapproved Wi-Fi system.” In the second charge, Marrero admitted that she “willfully failed to transmit a Commanding Officer’s Suggestion box comment to the Commander.” Marrero also pleaded guilty to two counts of violating UCMJ, Article 107 (False Official Statements) for her repeated statements denying the existence of the Wi-Fi system onboard the ship. Marrero was reduced one pay grade for her offenses.

Marrero was demoted from Senior Chief Petty Officer to Chief Petty Officer after being found guilty of dereliction of duty and providing false official statements to commanders on May 29. Before her trial, Naval Surface Force Pacific, or SURFPAC, quietly relieved her of her leadership position aboard the Manchester.

INDICATORS

Security and Compliance Incidents – She knowingly purchased a Starlink satellite dish, snuck it aboard the naval vessel, and installed it. She additionally installed network boosters, all while attempting to obscure the network from regular view.

Technical Activity – When junior sailors and commanding officers noticed the network, Marrero denied its existence. Marrero attempted to conceal the Wi-Fi to reflect an on-board copier. She also altered a data display image for the Starlink account to reflect lesser data usages.

Personal Conduct – Marrero and more than 15 chiefs onboard the Manchester used the network to check sports scores, text, and stream movies.

IMPACT

- Investigators found that the entire Chiefs Mess knew about the secret system, and those who didn't buy into it were nonetheless culpable for not reporting the misconduct. Those chiefs and senior chiefs who used, paid for, helped hide, or knew about the system were given administrative nonjudicial punishment at commodore's mast, according to the investigation.
- "The installation and usage of Starlink, without the approval of higher headquarters, poses a serious risk to mission, operational security, and information security," the investigation states. "Using such a wireless network for entertainment could cause a serious security breach. The danger such systems pose to the crew, the ship, and the Navy cannot be understated."

ADDITIONAL

- Marrero faced an additional initial charge of Obstruction of Justice. As part of her plea deal, this charge was dismissed.
- The Dereliction of Duty charge and its two underlying specifications and the False Official Statements charge, and its three underlying specifications were heard and tried before a military judge alone. The charge for Obstruction of Justice was heard and tried before a panel of enlisted members.
- Marrero lied and misled her commanding officer about the network at least three times. False claim 1: May 2023 – "No, the CPO does not have Wi-Fi onboard." False claim 2: July 2023 – "There is absolutely no Wi-Fi onboard." False claim 3: (date missing) "No, the CPO does not have Wi-Fi onboard."
- According to court records, Marrero had no affirmative duty to perform concerning the ship's IT infrastructure. Marrero took active measures to conceal both the Starlink device and the supporting Wi-Fi extending devices used to provide additional coverage through the ship. Prosecutors said Marrero "failed to prevent the USS Manchester's exposure to operational security risk, as it was her duty to do."
- Marrero paid for the \$2,800 Starlink dish with her personal credit card and was the network administrator. She and another chief installed the dish during an "aloft" period when duties are not recorded in the ship's logs.

Questions to consider:

- Junior crew members reported that there was an additional Wi-Fi source aboard the ship. What steps could they have taken to mitigate the risk? What risks do unauthorized wireless networks and/or devices pose to your organization?

Resources for further exploration:

- Job Aid – Insider Threat Potential Risk Indicators
(<https://www.cdse.edu/Portals/124/Documents/jobaids/insider/INTJ0181-insider-threat-indicators-job-aid.pdf>)
- Job Aid – Insider Threat Reporting Procedures
(<https://www.cdse.edu/Portals/124/Documents/jobaids/insider/insider-threat-reporting-procedures.pdf>)
- eLearning Course – Cyber Insider Threat
(<https://www.cdse.edu/Training/eLearning/INT280/>)

Supporting Through Reporting!

Contact the appropriate POC to report any observed potential risk indicators:

Name: _____ Agency/Department: _____
Title: Supervisor/Security Officer/ITP Senior Official/ITP Manager